# Discourse on Political Economy

[1] Economy (*Ethics and Politics*), the word is derived from ὅικος, *house*, and νὸμος, *law*, and originally merely means the wise and legitimate government of the household for the common good of the entire family. The meaning of the term was subsequently extended to the government of the large family, which is the state. In order to distinguish the two usages, it is called *general* or *political* economy in the latter case, and in the former, *domestic* or *particular economy*. This article deals only with the first. Regarding domestic economy, see FATHER OF THE FAMILY.

[2] Even if the similarity between the family and the state were as close as a number of authors claim, it would not follow that the rules of conduct appropriate to one of these two societies suited the other: they differ too much in size to admit of being administered in the same way, and there will always be a very great difference between domestic government, where the father can see everything for himself, and civil government, where the chief sees almost nothing but through someone else's eyes. For things to become equal in this respect, the father's talents, force, and all of his faculties would have to increase in proportion to the size of the family, and the soul of a powerful monarch would have to be to an ordinary man's as the extent of his empire is to a private person's inheritance.

[3] But how could the government of the state be like that of the family, when its foundation is so different? Since the father is physically stronger than his children, so long as they require his assistance, paternal power is rightly taken to be established by nature. In the large family all of whose members are naturally equal, political authority, which is purely arbitrary in its institution, can only be founded on conventions, and the ma[*242*]gistrate can command others only by virtue of the laws. The father's duties are dictated to him by natural sentiments, and in a tone that rarely allows him to disobey. Chiefs have no comparable rule, and are really accountable to the people only for what they have promised it they would do, and which it has a right to demand they perform. Another even more important difference, is that

since children have nothing but what they receive from the father, it is obvious that all the rights of property belong to him, or emanate from him; the very opposite is the case in the large family, where the general administration is established solely to insure private property, which is prior to it. The primary aim of the entire household's labors is to preserve and to increase the father's patrimony, so that he might someday divide it among his children without impoverishing them; whereas the treasury's wealth is but a means, often poorly understood, to maintain private persons in peace and plenty. In a word, the small family is destined to die out, and to break up someday into a number of other similar families; but since the large family is made to last forever in the same state, the first has to increase in order to multiply [into a number of other similar families]: whereas not only does it suffice for the other to preserve itself, but it can easily be proved that any increase is more prejudicial than useful to it.

[4] For various reasons derived from the nature of the thing, the father ought to command in the family. In the first place, the authority of the father and of the mother ought not to be equal; rather, the government has to be one, and when opinions are divided there has to be one predominant voice that decides. In the second place, regardless of how slight the incapacities specific to women may be thought to be; since they invariably impose intervals of inaction on her, this is a sufficient reason to exclude her from this primacy: for when the balance is perfectly equal, a straw is enough to tip it. Moreover, the husband has to be able to review his wife's conduct: for it matters to him that the children he is forced to recognize and to raise belong to none other than himself. The wife who has nothing comparable to fear, has not the same right over the husband. In the third place, the children ought to obey the father, initially out of necessity, then out of grati[*243*]tude; after having their needs attended to by him for the first half of their life, they should devote the second half to providing for his needs. In the fourth place, as regards servants, they also owe him their services in exchange for his providing their subsistence; unless they break the bargain when it no longer suits them. I say nothing about slavery; because it is contrary to nature, and no right can authorize it.

[5] None of this obtains in political society. Far from the chief's having a natural interest in the happiness of private individuals, it is not uncommon for him to seek his own happiness in their misery. When magistracy is hereditary, a child often commands men: when it is elective, a thousand inconveniences attend elections, and in either case all the advantages of paternity are lost. If you have but a single chief, you are at the discretion of a master who has no reason to love you; if you have several, you have to bear both their tyranny and their dissensions. In a word, abuses are inevitable and their consequences fatal in any society, where the public interest and the laws have no natural force whatsoever, and are constantly under attack from the personal interest and the passions of the chief as well as of the members.

[6] Although the functions of the father of a family and of the foremost magistrate should aim at the same goal, they do so in such different ways; their duty and rights are so distinct, that it is impossible to confuse them without forming false ideas about the fundamental laws of society and falling into errors fatal to humankind. Indeed, while the voice of nature is the best counsel a good father should heed in order to fulfill his duties well, for the magistrate it is nothing but a false guide constantly tending to separate him from his duties, and which sooner or later drags him to his own and to the state's ruin, unless he is restrained by the most sublime virtue. The only precaution the father of the family needs, is to guard against depravity and to keep his natural inclinations from growing corrupt; but it is these very inclinations that corrupt the magistrate. To do well, the first need only consult his heart; the other becomes a traitor the moment he heeds his: he should be wary even of his reason, and follow no other rule than the public reason, which is the law. Indeed, nature has made many [*244*] good fathers of families; but it is doubtful that since the world has been in existence human wisdom made even ten men capable of governing their like.

[7] From everything I have just set forth, it follows that *public economy* has rightly been distinguished from *private economy*, and that since the family and the state have nothing in common but the chiefs' obligation to make each happy, the same rules of conduct could not apply to both. It seemed to me that these few lines would

suffice to overthrow the odious system which Sir [Robert] Filmer tried to establish in a work entitled *Patriarcha*, and to which two illustrious men did too much honor by writing books to refute it: besides, this error is very old, since even Aristotle saw fit to combat it with arguments that can be found in the first book of his *Politics*.

[8] I invite my readers also clearly to distinguish *public economy*, which is my topic, and which I call *government*, from the supreme authority, which I call *sovereignty*; a distinction which consists in this, that the one has the legislative right and in some cases obligates the very body of the nation, whereas the other has only the executive power, and can only obligate individuals. *See* POLITICS and SOVEREIGNTY.

[9] Allow me briefly to draw a common and in many respects imprecise comparison, but one suited to making myself better understood.

[10] The body politic, taken by itself, can be looked upon as an organized body, alive, and similar to a man's. The sovereign power represents the head; the laws and customs are the brain, the principle of the nerves and the seat of the understanding, of the will, and of the senses, of which the judges and magistrates are the organs; commerce, industry, and agriculture are the mouth and stomach which prepare the common subsistence; public finances are the blood which a wise *economy*, performing the functions of the heart, sends out to distribute nourishment and life throughout the entire body; the citizens are the body and the members that make the machine move, live and work, and no part of which can be hurt without the painful impression of it being straightaway conveyed to the brain if the animal is in a state of health.

[*245*] [11] The life of the one as well of the other is the *self* common to the whole, the reciprocal sensitivity and the internal correspondence of all the parts. What if this communication should cease, the formal unity vanish, and the contiguous parts no longer belong together except by being next to one another? the man is dead, or the state is dissolved.

[12] The body politic is, then, also a moral being that has a will; and this general will, which always tends to the preservation and the well-being of the whole and of each part, and which is

the source of the laws, is, for all the members of the state, in relation to one another and to it, the rule of what is just and what unjust; a truth which, incidentally, shows how thoughtlessly so many writers have treated as theft the cunning prescribed to Lacedaemonian children to earn their frugal meal, as if everything the laws commands could fail to be legitimate. *See under* RIGHT the source of this great and luminous principle, which that article develops.

[13] It is important to note that this rule of justice, dependable with respect to all citizens, can be defective with respect to strangers; and the reason for this is clear: that in this case the will of the state, although general with respect to its members, is no longer so with respect to the other states and their members, but becomes for them a particular and individual will that has its rule of justice in the law of nature, which is equally consistent with the established principle: for in that case the great city of the world becomes the body politic of which the law of nature is always the general will, and of which the various states and peoples are merely individual members.

[14] From these same distinctions applied to every political society and its members, flow the most universal and dependable rules by which to judge a good or a bad government, and in general, the morality of all human actions.

[15] Every political society is made up of other, smaller societies of different kinds, each one of which has its interests and maxims; but these societies which everyone perceives because they have an external and authorized form, are not the only ones that really exist in the state; all private individuals who are united by a common interest, make up as many other, permanent or transient [societies] whose force is no less real for being [*246*] less manifest, and the close study of their workings makes for genuine knowledge of morals [*moeurs*]. It is all these tacit or formal associations which in so many ways modify the appearance of the public will by the influence of their own. The will of these particular societies always has two relations; for the member of the association, it is a general will; for the large society, it is a particular will, which very often proves to be upright in the first respect, and nefarious in the second. A given person may be a devout priest, or a courageous soldier, or a zealous lawyer, and a bad citizen.

A given deliberation may be advantageous to the small community, and most pernicious to the large one. It is true that since particular societies are always subordinate to those that contain them, one ought to obey the latter in preference to the former, that the duties of the citizen take precedence over those of the senator, and those of man over those of the citizen: but unfortunately personal interest is always inversely proportional to duty, and grows in direct proportion as the association grows narrower and the commitment less sacred; invincible proof that the most general will is also the most just, and that the voice of the people is indeed the voice of God.

[16] However it does not follow that public deliberations are always equitable; they may not be so regarding foreign affairs; I have stated the reason why this is so. Thus it is not impossible that a well-governed republic wage an unjust war. Nor is it impossible that the council of a democracy pass bad decrees or condemn the innocent: but none of this will ever happen unless the people is seduced by private interests which some few skillful men succeed by their reputation and eloquence to substitute for the people's own interest. Then the public deliberation will be one thing, and the general will another thing entirely. Do not, therefore, raise the democracy of Athens as an objection to me, because Athens was in fact not a democracy, but a most tyrannical aristocracy governed by learned men and orators. Attend carefully to what happens in any deliberation, and you will see that the general will is always for the common good; but very often some secret division develops, some tacit alliance which causes the assembly's natural disposition to be eluded in favor of private views. [*247*] Then the social body really divides into other bodies whose members adopt a general will, good and just with regard to these new bodies, unjust and bad with regard to the whole from which each of them dismembers itself.

[17] It is evident how easy it is, by means of these principles, to explain the manifest contradictions found in the conduct of so many men who are full of scruples and honor in some respects, deceitful and knavish in others, who trample underfoot the most sacred duties, yet are faithful to the death to commitments that are often illegitimate. This is how the most corrupt men invariably pay some sort of homage to the public faith; this (as was pointed

out in the *article* RIGHT) is how even brigands, the enemies of virtue in the large society, worship its semblance in their dens.

[18] In establishing the general will as the first principle of public *economy* and the fundamental rule of government, I did not believe it necessary to inquire seriously whether the magistrates belong to the people or the people to the magistrates, and whether in public affairs it is the good of the state or the good of the chiefs that should be consulted. The question has long since been settled one way by practice, and another by reason; and in general it would be a great folly to hope that those who are masters in deed, would prefer some other interest to their own. It would therefore be indicated to divide public *economy* further into popular and tyrannical. The first is that of any state where there is unity of interest and will between the people and the chiefs; the other will necessarily exist wherever the government and the people have different interests, and hence opposing wills. Its maxims are recorded throughout the annals of history and the satires of Machiavelli. The others are found only in the writings of the philosophers who dare to proclaim the rights of mankind.

[19] 1. The first and the most important maxim of legitimate or popular government, that is to say of government that has the good of the people as its object, is, then, as I have said, to follow the general will in all things; but in order to follow it, one has to know it, and above all clearly to distin[*248*]guish it from the particular will, beginning with one's own; a distinction it is always very difficult to draw and on which only the most sublime virtue can shed enough light. Since one has to be free in order to will, another, no lesser difficulty is to secure both public freedom and governmental authority. Inquire into the motives that have led men united by their mutual needs in the great society to unite more closely by means of civil societies; you will find none other than that of securing the goods, the life, and the freedom of each member through the protection of all: but how can men be forced to defend the freedom of one of them without infringing on the freedom of the others? and how can the public needs be met without infringing on the private property of those who are forced to contribute to them? Regardless of the sophisms by which all this may get colored, certain it is that if my will can be compelled, I am no longer free, and that I am no longer master of my goods if

someone else can interfere with them. This difficulty, which must have seemed insurmountable, was resolved together with the first difficulty by the most sublime of all human institutions, or rather by a heavenly inspiration that taught man to imitate here below the immutable decrees of the divinity. By what inconceivable art were the means found to subjugate men in order to make them free? to use the goods, the labor and even the life of all of its members in the service of the state, without compelling and consulting them? to shackle their will by their own consent? to have their consent prevail over their refusal, and to force them to punish themselves when they do what they did not want? How can it be that they obey and no one commands, that they serve yet have no master; all the more free in fact the more subjugated they appear to be, because no one loses any more of his own freedom than might harm someone else's freedom? These marvels are the work of law. It is to law alone that men owe justice and freedom. It is this salutary organ of the will of all that restores in [the realm of] right the natural equality among men. It is this heavenly voice that dictates the precepts of public reason to every citizen, and teaches him to act in conformity with the maxims of his own judgment, and not to be in contradiction with himself. [*249*] It alone is also what the chiefs should cause to speak when they command; for as soon as one man lays claim to subjecting another to his private will independently of the laws, he right away leaves the civil state and places himself in relation to him in the pure state of nature where obedience is prescribed solely by necessity.

[20] The chief's most pressing interest as well as his most indispensable duty, is therefore to see to it that the laws of which he is the minister and on which his entire authority is founded, are observed. His having to make others observe them is all the more reason for himself, who enjoys all of their benefits, to observe them. For his example carries such force that even if the people were willing for him to cast off the yoke of the law, he should refrain from taking advantage of such a dangerous prerogative, which others would soon seek to usurp in turn, often to his prejudice. In the final analysis, since all of society's commitments are by their [very] nature reciprocal, it is not possible to place oneself above the law without renouncing its advantages, and no one owes anything to anyone who claims not to owe anyone

anything. For the same reason, in a well regulated government no exemption from the law will ever be granted on any grounds whatsoever. Even the citizens who have deserved well of the fatherland should be rewarded with honors and never with privileges: for the republic is on the brink of ruin the moment it occurs to anyone to think it fine not to obey the laws. But if ever the nobility, or the military, or any other order in the state were to adopt such a maxim, everything would be irremediably lost.

[21] The power of the laws depends even more on their own wisdom than on the severity of their ministers, and the public will derives its greatest influence from the reason that dictated it: this is why Plato considers it a most important precaution always to place at the head of edicts a reasoned preamble which shows their justice and utility. Indeed, the first of all laws is to respect the laws: severity of punishments is nothing but a vain expedient thought up by small minds in order to substitute terror for the respect which they cannot secure. It has always been noted that the countries where punishments are most terrible, are also the countries where they [*250*] are most frequent; so that all the cruelty of punishments shows is the large number of people breaking the law, and that punishing everything with equal severity forces the guilty to commit crimes in order to escape the punishment for their wrongs.

[22] But although the government is not the master of the law, it is a considerable thing to be its guarantor and to dispose of a thousand ways of making it beloved. The talent for ruling consists in nothing else. With force in hand, there is no art to making everyone tremble, and not even much to winning men's hearts; for experience long ago taught the people to give its chiefs much credit for all the harm they do not inflict on it, and to adore them when they do not hate it. An imbecile who is obeyed can punish transgressions just like anyone else: the genuine statesman knows how to prevent them; he exercises his respectable dominion over wills even more than over deeds. If he could bring it about that everyone did the right thing, he would have nothing left to do, and the masterpiece of his labors would be to be able to remain idle. At least this much is certain, that the greatest talent of chiefs consists in disguising their power in order to render it less odious,

and to lead the state so peacefully that it appears not to need leaders.

[23] I therefore conclude that just as the lawgiver's first duty is to conform the laws to the general will, the first rule of public *economy* is that the administration conform to the laws. This much will even suffice for the state not to be badly governed, provided the lawgiver has attended as he should to everything required by the location, climate, soil, customs [*moeurs*], neighbors, and all the distinctive circumstances of the people he was to institute. This is not to say that there is not an infinite number of details of policy and of *economy* left to the wisdom of the government: but it always has two infallible rules for acting well on such occasions: one is the spirit of the law, which should help decide the cases it could not anticipate; the other is the general will, the source and supplement of all the laws, and which should always be consulted in their absence. How, I will be asked, can the general will be known in the cases in which it has not declared itself? Has the entire nation to be assembled at every unanticipated event? It will be all the less [*251*] necessary to assemble it, as it is not certain that its decision would be the expression of the general will; as this method is impractical with a large people, and is rarely necessary when the government is well-intentioned: for the chiefs know well enough that the general will is always on the side most favorable to the public interest, that is to say, the most equitable; so that one need only be just in order to be sure of following the general will. Often, when it is too flagrantly crossed, it allows itself to be perceived in spite of the fearful curb [on it] by the public authority. I look as close to home as I can for examples to follow in such a case. In China, the prince's constant maxim is to find his officers in the wrong in all disputes that arise between them and the people. Is bread expensive in one province? the commissioner gets jailed: does a riot break out in another? the governor is demoted and every mandarin is answerable with his life for all the evil that occurs in his department. Not that the affair is not subsequently examined in a regular trial: but this is the verdict anticipated on the basis of long experience. It rarely makes for an injustice that requires redress; and the emperor, persuaded that public clamor never arises without cause, always discovers among the seditious cries which he punishes, some just grievances which he corrects.

[24] It is a considerable accomplishment to have brought order and peace to reign in all parts of the republic; it is a considerable accomplishment to have the state tranquil and the law respected; but if one does nothing more, it will all be more appearance than reality, and the government will find it difficult to get itself obeyed if it limits itself to obedience. While it is good to know how to use men as they are, it is even better to make them what one needs them to be; the most absolute authority is that which penetrates to man's innermost [self], and affects his will no less than his deeds. Certain it is that in the long run peoples are what government makes them be. Warriors, citizens, men, when it wants; mob and rabble when it so pleases: and every prince who despises his subjects dishonors himself by showing that he did not know how to make them worthy of esteem. Therefore, form men if you want to command men: if you would have the laws obeyed, see to it [*252*] that they are loved, and that in order to do what one ought, it suffice to think that one ought to do it. That was the great art of ancient governments in those remote times when philosophers gave laws to peoples, and only used their authority to make them wise and happy. Hence the many sumptuary laws, the many regulations regarding morals, the many public maxims that were adopted or rejected with the utmost care. Even tyrants did not ignore this important part of administration, and they attended to the corruption of their slaves' morals as carefully as the magistrates did to the improvement of their fellow-citizens' morals. But our modern governments which believe that they have done everything when they have raised money, never even imagine that it is necessary or possible to go that far.

[25] II. Second essential rule of public *economy*, no less important than the first. Do you wish the general will carried out? see to it that all particular wills take their bearings by it; and since virtue is nothing but this conformity of the particular to the general will, to say the same thing in a word, make virtue reign.

[26] If politicians were less blinded by their ambition, they would see how impossible it is for any establishment whatsoever to function in conformity with the spirit of its institution, unless it is directed in accordance with the law of duty; they would sense that the mainspring of public authority is in the hearts of the citizens, and that nothing can replace morals in sustaining

government. Not only are none but decent people [*gens de bien*] capable of administrating the laws, but basically none but upright people [*honnêtes gens*] are capable of obeying them. Anyone who manages to withstand remorse will soon manage to withstand corporal punishment; a less harsh, less continuous form of punishment, and from which there is at least some hope of escaping; and regardless of the precautions that may be taken, those who are only waiting for impunity to do evil will scarcely lack means of eluding the law or escaping the penalty. Then, as all particular interests unite against the general interest which is no longer that of anyone, public vices have more force to weaken the laws than the laws have to repress the vices; and the corruption of the people and of the chiefs finally spreads to the government, how[*253*]ever wise it may be: the worst of all abuses is to obey the laws in appearance only so as to break them safely in fact. Soon the best laws become the most harmful: it would be a hundred times better if they did not exist; it would be one resource remaining when no others are left. In such circumstances it is useless to add edicts upon edicts, regulations upon regulations. All this does is to introduce new abuses without correcting the earlier ones. The more you multiply laws, the more contemptible you make them: and all the overseers you introduce are nothing but new lawbreakers bound either to partner with the old ones or to do their plundering on their own. Soon the price of virtue becomes that of brigandage: the vilest men are the most accredited; the greater they are, the more contemptible they are; their infamy bursts forth in their dignities, and they are dishonored by their honors. If they buy the votes of the chiefs or the protection of women, it is so that they might then themselves sell justice, duty and the state; and the people which does not see that its vices are the first cause of its misfortunes, grumbles and moaning cries out, "All my troubles are due solely to those I pay to protect me against them."

[27] At such times, in place of the voice of duty which no longer speaks in men's hearts, the chiefs are forced to substitute the cry of terror or the lure of an apparent interest by which they deceive their creatures. This is when one has to resort to all the petty and contemptible ruses they call *state maxims* and *cabinet secrets*. All the vigor the government has left is used by its members to ruin and supplant one another

while [the public] business is left unattended or gets attended to only as personal interest requires and dictates. In the end all of these great politicians' skill consists in so dazzling those they need that each believes he is working for his own interest while working for *theirs*; I say theirs, as if it were indeed the case that the chiefs' genuine interest consisted in annihilating peoples in order to subjugate them, and to ruin what is theirs in order to secure its possession.

[28] But when the citizens love their duty and the trustees of the public authority sincerely apply themselves to fostering this love by their example and their [*254*] efforts, all difficulties vanish, administration assumes an ease that enables it to do without that shady art which is mysterious only because it is so sinister. Those emulous spirits, so dangerous and so admired, all those great ministers whose glory is all one with the people's misery, are no longer missed; public morals take the place of the chiefs' genius; and the more virtue reigns, the less talents are needed. Even ambition is better served by [doing one's] duty than by usurpation: the people, convinced that its chiefs labor solely for its happiness, spares them, by its deference, the trouble of laboring to consolidate their power; and history shows us in a thousand places that the authority the people grants to those it loves and by whom it is loved, is a hundred times more absolute than all the tyranny of usurpers. This does not mean that the government should be afraid of using its power, but that it ought to use it only in a legitimate manner. History provides a thousand examples of ambitious or pusillanimous chiefs who have been undone by laxness or vanity [*orgueil*], none [of a chief] who fared badly for being only equitable. But negligence should not be mistaken for moderation, nor gentleness for weakness. To be just, one has to be severe: to tolerate the wickedness one has the right and the power to repress, is to be wicked oneself.

[29] It is not enough to tell the citizens, be good; they have to be taught to be so; and even example which, in this respect is the first lesson, is not the only means that should be used: love of fatherland is the most effective; for as I have already said, every man is virtuous when his particular will conforms in all things to the general will, and we readily want what the people we love want.

[30] It seems that the sentiment of humanity dissipates and weakens as it spreads to the whole earth, and that we cannot be as touched by the calamities of Tartary or Japan as we are by those of a European people. Interest and commiseration must in some way be constricted and compressed in order to be rendered active. Now since this inclination in us can be useful only to those with whom we have to live, it is good that [the sentiment of] humanity concentrated among fellow-citizens, acquire in them added force through the habit of seeing one another and the common interest [*255*] that unites them. The greatest marvels of virtue have certainly been produced by love of fatherland: This gentle and lively sentiment which combines the force of *amour propre* with all the beauty of virtue, endows it with an energy which, without disfiguring it, makes it into the most heroic of all the passions. It is patriotism that produced the many immortal actions whose brilliance dazzles our weak eyes, and the many great men whose antique virtues are treated as fables ever since patriotism has been turned into an object of derision. This should not surprise us; the transports of tender hearts look like so many chimeras to anyone who has not felt them; love of fatherland, a hundred times more lively and delightful than the love of a mistress, can also only be conceived by experiencing it: but it is easy to recognize in all the hearts it inflames, in all the actions it inspires, this seething and sublime ardor which even the purest virtue does not radiate when separated from love of fatherland. Let us dare to contrast Socrates himself with Cato: the one was more a philosopher, the other more a citizen. Athens was already lost, and Socrates no longer had any other fatherland than the whole world: Cato always carried his fatherland within his heart; he lived only for it, and could not outlive it. Socrates's virtue is that of the wisest of men: but compared to Caesar and Pompey, Cato seems like a god among mortals. The one teaches some few private individuals, contends with the sophists, and dies for the truth: the other defends the state, freedom, the laws against the conquerors of the world, and finally leaves the earth when he no longer finds a fatherland to serve on it. A worthy disciple of Socrates would be the most virtuous of his contemporaries; a worthy imitator of Cato would be the greatest of his contemporaries. The virtue of the first would make for his happiness, the second would seek his happiness in

that of all. We would be taught by the one and led by the other, and this alone would decide the preference between them: for no one has ever made a people of wise men, but it is not impossible to make a people happy.

[31] Do we want peoples to be virtuous? Let us then begin by making them love their fatherland: but how will they love it if the fatherland is nothing more to them than it is to foreigners, and grants them only what it cannot refuse to anyone? It would be much worse if they did not even enjoy civil security [*256*] in it, and their goods, their life or their freedom were at the discretion of powerful men, without their being able or permitted to dare to invoke the laws. Then, subject to the duties of the civil state without enjoying even the rights of the state of nature and without being able to use their own force to defend themselves, they would therefore be in the worst condition in which free men can find themselves, and the word *fatherland* could only have an odious or a ridiculous meaning for them. It is not credible that an arm can be injured or cut off and the pain of it not be conveyed to the head; it is no more credible that the general will agree that one member of the State, regardless of who he may be, injure or destroy another member, than that the fingers of a man in possession of his reason gouge out his eyes. Individual safety is so closely bound up with the public confederation that, if it were not for the concessions that have to be made to human weakness, this convention would by right be dissolved if a single citizen in the state perished who could have been saved; if a single one were wrongfully kept in jail, and if a single lawsuit were lost through a manifest injustice: for once the fundamental conventions have been violated, it is no longer clear what right or interest could maintain the people in the social union, lest it be retained in it by sheer force, which makes for the dissolution of the civil state.

[32] Indeed, is not the body of the nation committed to provide for the preservation of the least of its members with as much care as for that of all the others? and is the safety of a single citizen any less the common cause than the safety of the entire state? If we are told that it is good that a single person perish for all, I will admire this statement from the mouth of a worthy and virtuous patriot who voluntarily and out of duty consecrates himself to die for his country's safety: but if what is meant is that the government is

permitted to sacrifice one innocent person for the safety of the many, I hold this to be one of the most execrable maxims that tyranny ever invented, the most false that might be advanced, the most dangerous that might be accepted, and the most directly contrary to the fundamental laws of society. Far from a single person having to perish for the sake of all, all have pledged their goods and their lives to the defense of each one of them, to the end that individual weakness might always be protected by the [*257*] public force, and each member by the whole state. Assume cutting off one person after another from the people, and then press the partisans of this maxim to explain more fully what they understand by *the body of the state*, and you will see that they will finally reduce it to a small number of men who are not the people, but the people's officers and who, having obligated themselves by personal oath to perish for its safety, claim that this proves that it is up to the people to perish for theirs.

[33] Do you want to find examples of the protection the state owes its members, and of the respect it owes their persons? they have to be looked for exclusively among the most illustrious and the most courageous nations on earth, and it is only free peoples that know what a man is worth. In Sparta, it is common knowledge how perplexed the entire republic was when it was a question of punishing a guilty citizen. In Macedonia, a man's life was a matter of such importance that for all of his greatness, Alexander, that powerful monarch, would not have dared to have a criminal Macedonian put to death in cold blood, without having had the accused appear and defend himself before his fellow citizens, and been condemned by them. But the Romans distinguished themselves above all peoples on earth by the government's regard for private individuals, and its scrupulous care to respect the inviolable rights of all members of the state. Nothing was as sacred as the life of the simple citizens; it required no less than the assembly of the entire people to condemn one of them: neither the senate itself nor the consuls in all their majesty had this right, and among the most powerful people on earth, the crime and the punishment of a citizen was a public calamity; indeed it seemed so harsh to shed blood for any crime whatsoever, that by the *lex Porcia* the death penalty was commuted to exile for all those who might wish to survive the loss of so sweet a fatherland. Everything in Rome

and in the armies breathed this love of the citizens for one another, and that respect for the name Roman which raised the courage and animated the virtue of anyone who had the honor to bear it. The hat of a citizen freed from slavery, the civic crown of the one who had saved another's life, were what people looked upon with the greatest pleasure in celebrations of military triumphs; and it should be no[*258*]ted that of the crowns with which fine actions were honored in wartime, only the civic and the victors' crown were made of grass and leaves, all the others were made merely of gold. This is how Rome was virtuous and became the mistress of the world. Ambitious chiefs! A shepherd governs his dogs and his flocks, and is but the least of men. If it is fine to command, it is so when those who obey us can do us honor: therefore, respect your fellow citizens, and you will render yourselves respectable; respect freedom and your power will increase daily: never exceed your rights and soon they will be limitless.

[34] Let the fatherland then prove to be the common mother of the citizens, let the advantages they enjoy in their country endear it to them, let the government leave them a sufficient share in the public administration to feel they are at home, and let the laws be in their eyes nothing but the guarantors of the common freedom. These rights, fine as they are, belong to all men; but without appearing to attack them directly, the ill will of the chiefs easily reduces their effect to naught. Law that is abused serves the powerful both as an offensive weapon and as a shield against the weak, and the pretext of the public good is always the people's most dangerous scourge. What is most needful and perhaps most difficult in government is a strict integrity to render justice to all, and above all to protect the poor against the tyranny of the rich. The greatest evil has already been done when there are poor people to defend and rich people to restrain. The full force of the laws is effective only in the middle range; they are equally powerless against the treasures of the rich and the misery of the poor; the first eludes them, the second escapes them; the one tears the web, the other slips through it.

[35] It is, therefore, one of the most important tasks of government to prevent extreme inequality of fortunes, not by taking their treasures away from those who possess them, but by depriving everyone of the means to accumulate treasures, nor by building

poorhouses but by shielding citizens from becoming poor. Men unevenly distributed across the territory and crowded in one place while others become depopulated; the arts of pleasure and of pure skill favored at the expense of the useful and the [*259*] arduous trades; agriculture sacrificed to commerce; the tax-farmer made necessary by the bad administration of the state's finances; finally, venality pushed to such excess that reputation is reckoned in cash, and the virtues themselves are sold for money: such are the most perceptible causes of opulence and of misery, of private interest replacing the public interest, of the citizens' hatred of one another, of their indifference to the common cause, of the corruption of the people, and of the weakening of all the springs of government. Such are, consequently, evils difficult to cure by the time they make themselves felt, but which a wise administration must prevent in order to maintain, by means of good morals, respect for the laws, love of fatherland, and the vigor of the general will.

[36] But all of these precautions will be insufficient unless one goes about it earlier still. I conclude this part of public economy where I should have begun it. The fatherland cannot endure without freedom, nor freedom without virtue, nor virtue without citizens; you will have everything if you form citizens; if you do not, you will have nothing but nasty slaves, beginning with the chiefs of the state. Now to form citizens is not the business of a single day, and to have them be citizens when they are men, they have to be taught when they are children. I may be told that anyone who has to govern men should not look for a perfection beyond their nature of which they are not capable; that he must not destroy the passions in them, and that carrying out such a project would be no more desirable than it would be possible. I grant all this all the more readily as a man devoid of passions would certainly be a very bad citizen: but it also has to be granted that while men cannot be taught not to love anything, it is not impossible to teach them to love one object rather than another, and to love what is genuinely fine rather than what is deformed. If, for example, they are taught from sufficiently early on never to look upon their individual [self] except in its relations with the body of the state, and to perceive their own existence as, so to speak, only a part of its existence, they will at last succeed in somehow identifying with this larger whole, to feel themselves

members of the fatherland, to love it with that exquisite sentiment that every isolated man has only for himself, to raise [*260*] their soul perpetually to this great object, and thus to transform into a sublime virtue the dangerous disposition that gives rise to all of our vices. Not only does Philosophy demonstrate the possibility of these new directions, but History furnishes a thousand striking examples of it: the reason they are so rare among us is that no one cares whether there are citizens and still less does it occur to anyone to go about forming them early enough. It is too late to change our natural inclinations once they are set in their course, and habit has united with amour propre; it is too late to draw us out of ourselves once the human self, concentrated within our hearts, has there become actively engaged in the contemptible concerns that do away with all virtue and make up the life of petty souls. How could the love of fatherland arise in the midst of so many other passions that stifle it? and what is left for fellow-citizens of a heart already divided between greed, a mistress, and vanity?

[37] It is from the first moment of life that one must learn to deserve to live; and since one shares in the rights of citizens at birth, the moment of our birth should be when we begin exercising our duties. Inasmuch as there are laws for adulthood, there should be laws for childhood that teach obedience to others; and inasmuch as each man's reason is not left to be the sole judge of his duties, the education of children ought all the less to be left to their fathers' lights and prejudices, as that education matters to the state even more than it does to the fathers; for in the course of nature the father's death often deprives him of the last fruits of that education, but the fatherland sooner or later feels its effects; the state remains, and the family dissolves. If, by taking the fathers' place and assuming this important function, the public authority acquires their rights by fulfilling their duties, they have all the less reason to complain of it, as, strictly speaking, they do no more in this respect than change names, and under the name citizen they will have in common the same authority over their children which they exercised separately under the name *fathers*, and they will be no less obeyed by them when they speak in the name of law, than they were when they spoke in the name of nature. Public education under rules prescribed by the

government, and under magistrates established by the sovereign is, then, [*261*] one of the fundamental maxims of popular or legitimate government. If children are raised in common in a setting of equality, if they are imbued with the laws of the state and the maxims of the general will, if they are taught to respect them above all things, if they are surrounded by examples and objects that constantly speak to them of the tender mother that nurtures them, of her love for them, of the invaluable goods she bestows on them, and of what they owe her in return, we cannot doubt that this way they will learn to cherish one another as brothers, never to want anything but what the society wants, to substitute the deeds of men and citizens for the sterile and vain babble of sophists, and one day to become the defenders and fathers of the fatherland whose children they will have been for so long.

[38] I'll not say anything about the magistrates charged with overseeing this education, which is surely the state's most important business. Clearly if such marks of public trust were granted lightly, if this sublime office were not the reward for their labors of those who had worthily discharged all the other offices, the honorable and sweet repose of their old age, and the culmination of all their honors, the entire enterprise would be useless and the education unsuccessful; for wherever the lesson is not backed by authority and the precept by example, instruction remains fruitless, and virtue itself is discredited in the mouth of one who does not practice it. But let illustrious warriors, bent under the weight of their laurels, preach courage; let upright magistrates grown white in high office and on the bench teach justice; they will, in doing so, form virtuous successors, and transmit from age to age unto succeeding generations the experience and the talents of chiefs, the courage and the virtue of citizens, and their shared emulation to live and to die for the fatherland.

[39] I know of only three peoples that engaged in public education in former times; namely, the Cretans, the Lacedaemonians, and the ancient Persians: it was a very great success among all three, and among the last two it achieved wonders. Once the world was divided into nations too large to be well governed, this was no longer a practicable way; and other reasons which [*262*] are readily evident to the reader, further

prevented its being tried among any modern people. It is most remarkable that the Romans were able to do without it; but Rome was for five hundred years one continual miracle which the world should not hope to see again. The Romans' virtue, engendered by the horror of tyranny and the crimes of tyrants, and by the innate love of the fatherland, made all their homes as many schools of citizens; and the fathers' unlimited power over their children made for such severity in private rule that the father, more feared than the magistrate, was the censor of morals and the avenger of the laws in his domestic tribunal.

[40] This is how an alert and well-intentioned government, constantly vigilant to maintain or restore love of fatherland and good morals among the people, forestalls from afar the evils that sooner or later result from the citizens' indifference to the fate of the republic, and contains within narrow bounds that personal interest which so isolates individuals that the state is weakened by their power and has nothing to hope for from their good will. Wherever the people loves its country, respects its laws, and lives simply, there is little left to be done to make it happy; and in public administration, where fortune plays less of a role than it does in the fate of individuals, wisdom is so close to happiness, that the two merge.

[41] III. It is not enough to have citizens and to protect them; it is also necessary to give thought to their subsistence; and providing for the public needs is a clear aim of the general will and the third essential duty of government. It should be evident that this duty consists not in filling the granaries of private parties and to exempt them from labor, but in keeping plenty so within their reach that, in order to acquire it labor is always necessary and never useless. It also extends to all operations involved in managing the public treasury and the expenditures of public administration. Thus, after having discussed general *economy* in relation to the government of persons, it remains for us to consider it in relation to the administration of goods.

[42] This part offers no fewer difficulties to resolve or contradictions to remove than the preceding one. It is cer[*263*]tain that the right of property is the most sacred of all the citizens' rights, and in some respects more important than freedom itself; either because it bears more directly on the preservation of life; or

because, since goods are more easily usurped and more difficult to defend than persons, greater respect ought to be accorded to what can be seized more easily; or, finally, because property is the true foundation of civil society and the true guarantee of the citizens' commitments: for if persons were not answerable with their goods, nothing would be so easy as to elude one's duties and scoff at the laws. On the other hand, it is no less certain that the maintenance of the state and the government involves costs and expenditures; and since anyone who grants the end cannot refuse the means, it follows that the members of the society must contribute to its upkeep with their goods. What is more, it is difficult to protect individuals' property on the one hand without attacking it on another, and it is not possible to have all regulations regarding inheritances, wills, contracts, avoid constraining citizens in some respects regarding the disposition of their own goods and hence regarding their right to property.

[43] But in addition to what I have said above about the conformity between the authority of the law and the freedom of the citizen, one important remark concerning the disposition of goods remains to be made, which eliminates a good many difficulties. Namely that, as Pufendorf has shown, by its very nature the right of property does not extend beyond the life of the proprietor, and the moment a man is dead his goods no longer belong to him. To prescribe to him the conditions under which he may dispose of them is, therefore, at bottom, not so much to abridge this right in appearance as it is to expand it in fact.

[44] In general, although the institution of the laws that regulate private individuals' power to dispose of their goods belongs exclusively to the sovereign, the spirit of these laws which the government should heed in implementing them, is that from father to son and from kin to kin a family's goods should leave the family or be alienated as little as possible. There is an immediate reason for this as regards children, for whom the right of property would be quite useless if the father left them nothing, and who, moreover, since they have often contributed by their labor to the acquisition of [*264*] the father's goods, participate in this right on their own. But another, more remote but no less important reason for it is that nothing is more fatal to morals and to the republic than continual changes of status and fortune among the citizens; changes that are

the proof and the source of a thousand disorders, that overwhelm and confuse everything, and as a result of which, since those who were brought up for one position now find themselves destined for another, neither those who rise nor those who fall can adopt the maxims or the enlightenment suited to their new station, much less fulfill its duties. I turn to the topic of public finances.

[45] If the people governed itself and there were no intermediary between the administration of the state and the citizens, they would simply have to assess themselves as the occasion required, in proportion to public needs and individual resources; and since no one would ever lose sight of how monies are collected or used, neither fraud nor abuse could insinuate itself into how they are managed: the state would never be hobbled by debts, nor the people overwhelmed by taxes, or it would at least be consoled for the harshness of the levy by feeling confident about the use of these taxes. But things cannot work this way; and however limited a state may be, its civil society is always too populous to allow it to be governed by all of its members. Public monies must necessarily pass through the hands of the chiefs who, in addition to the state's interest, all have their own private interest which is not the last one heeded. The people, for its part, more alert to the chiefs' greed and mad expenditures than to the public needs, grumbles at seeing itself despoiled of necessities in order to contribute to others' superfluities; and once these maneuvers have embittered it to a certain point, the most honest administration will not succeed in restoring confidence. Then if the contributions are voluntary, they yield nothing; if they are forced, they are illegitimate; and the difficulty of a just and wise *economy* lies in this cruel alternative of either allowing the state to perish or attacking the sacred right of property, which is its support.

[46] The first thing the founder of a republic must do after establishing the laws, is to find funds sufficient for the upkeep of the magistrates [*265*] and other officers, and for all public expenditures. This fund is called *aerarium* or *fisc* if it is in money, *public domain* if in land, and this latter is far preferable to the other for obvious reasons. Anyone who has reflected sufficiently on this matter, could hardly be of a different opinion about it than Bodin, who regards the public domain as the most honest and most secure of all means to provide for the state's

needs; and it is worth noting that Romulus's first care in the division of land was to set aside a third of it for this use. I admit that it is not impossible for the yield from a badly administered public domain to be reduced to nothing; but it is not of the essence of the public domain to be badly administered.

[47] Prior to any use of it, this fund ought to be assigned or accepted by the assembly of the people or of the estates of the country, which should then determine its use. After this solemnity, which renders such funds inalienable, they so to speak change in nature, and their proceeds become so sacred that diverting the least portion of them to the detriment of their intended purpose it is not only the most infamous of all thefts but a crime of lèse-majesté. It is a great dishonor for Rome that the integrity of the quaestor Cato should have aroused comment, and that an emperor rewarding a singer's talents with a few coins had to add that this money came from his family's funds and not from the state's. But if there are few Galbas, where shall we look for Catos? and once vice no longer dishonors, what chiefs will be so scrupulous as to refrain from touching the public revenues left to their discretion, and as not promptly to deceive even themselves, by pretending to confound their vain and scandalous dissipations with the glory of the state, and the means of extending their authority with those of increasing its power? It is above all in this delicate part of administration that virtue is the only effective instrument, and that the magistrate's integrity is the only curb capable of checking his greed. The books and all of the accounts which managers keep serve less to lay bare their cheating than to cover it up; and prudence is never as prompt to think up new precautions as knavery is to elude them. Therefore, leave be registers and [*266*] papers, and place the finances in trustworthy hands; it is the only way to have them managed faithfully.

[48] Once the public funds are established, the chiefs of the state are its rightful administrators; for this administration makes up one part of government, always essential, though not always equally so; its influence increases as that of the other springs decreases; and a government may be said to have reached its ultimate degree of corruption when it has no other sinews left but money: now, since all government continually tends to

slacken, this reason alone shows why no state can subsist unless its revenues continually increase.

[49] The first recognition of the need for such an increase is also the first sign of internal disorder in the state: and the wise administrator, while thinking about how to find money to attend to the present need, does not neglect inquiring into the distant cause of this new need: just as a sailor, seeing water flood his vessel does not forget, as he works the pumps, also to get the leak located and plugged.

[50] From this rule flows the most important maxim for the administration of finances, which is to concentrate much more carefully on preventing needs than on increasing revenues; however diligent one might be, help that comes only after the harm, and more slowly, invariably leaves the state on sufferance: as one tries to remedy one inconvenience, another makes itself felt, and the very correctives produce new inconveniences; so that in the end the nation goes into debt, the people is downtrodden, the government loses all its vigor, and does but little with much money. I believe that from this great, well-established maxim flowed the wonders of ancient governments, which did more with their parsimony than ours do with all their treasures; and this is perhaps the source of the ordinary meaning of the word *economy*, understood as the wise management of what one has rather than as the means of acquiring what one does not have.

[51] Independently of the public domain, which yields to the state in proportion to the probity of those who manage it, anyone adequately acquainted with the full force of the general administration, especially when it restricts itself to legitimate means, [*267*] would be astounded at the resources chiefs have to anticipate all public needs, without touching the goods of private individuals. Since they are the masters of all of the state's commerce, nothing is as easy for them as to direct it in a way that provides for everything, often without their appearing to be involved. The distribution of food, money, and commodities in just proportions, according to times and places, is the true secret of finance, and the source of its riches, provided that those who administer it are capable of looking far enough ahead, and of occasionally taking an apparent and immediate loss for the sake of huge real profits in the long run. When a government is seen to subsidize instead of taxing

the export of grain in years of plenty and its import in years of scarcity, one has to have such facts before one's eyes to believe them genuine, and one would look upon them as fictions if they had occurred long ago. Let us suppose that in order to prevent scarcity in bad years, one were to propose establishing public granaries, would not the upkeep of such a useful establishment serve as the pretext for new taxes in any number of countries? In Geneva such granaries, established and maintained by a wise administration are the public resource in bad years, and the principal state revenue at all times. *Alit et ditat* is the fine and just inscription one reads on the building's facade. In order to present here the economic system of a good government, I have often turned my eyes toward that of this republic: happy thus to find in my fatherland the example of the wisdom and happiness I would like to see reign in all countries.

[52] If one inquires into how the needs of a state grow, one will discover that it often happens more or less as it does in individuals, not so much by a genuine necessity than by a growth of useless desires, and that frequently expenditures are increased only to provide a pretext for increasing income; so that it would sometimes benefit the state to forgo being rich, and this apparent wealth is basically a greater burden to it than would be poverty itself. True, one might hope to keep peoples more tightly dependent by giving them with one hand what one has taken from them with the other, [*268*] and this was the policy Joseph followed with the Egyptians; but this vain sophism is all the more fatal to the state as the money no longer returns to the same hands as those it left, and as with such maxims one only enriches idle folk at the expense of useful men.

[53] An appetite for conquests is one of the most obvious and dangerous causes of this increase [of public needs and expenditures]. This appetite, often engendered by another kind of ambition than the one it seems to announce, is not always what it seems to be and its genuine motive is not so much the apparent desire to aggrandize the nation as the hidden desire to increase the chiefs' domestic authority with the help of an increase in the size of the military and under cover of the distraction caused in the citizens' minds by the war's objectives.

[54] This much, at least, is most certain, that nothing is as downtrodden or as miserable as conquering peoples, and that their very successes only increase their miseries: even if history did not teach us this, reason would be enough to prove to us that the larger a state is, the more do its expenditures become proportionately more massive and burdensome; for all the provinces have to contribute their share to the cost of the general administration, and in addition each province has to spend as much for its own particular administration as if it were independent. Add to this that all fortunes are made in one place and spent in another; which soon upsets the balance between production and consumption, and impoverishes much of the countryside to enrich a single town.

[55] Another source of the increase in public needs, related to the preceding one [is this]. A time may come when the citizens, no longer regarding themselves as interested in the common cause, would cease to be the defenders of the fatherland, and the magistrates would rather command mercenaries than free men, if only sometime somewhere to use the first the better to subjugate the others. Such was the state of Rome at the end of the republic and under the emperors; for all the victories of the first Romans, like those of Alexander, had been won by courageous citizens who were ready to give their blood for the fatherland when necessary, but who never sold it. Marius was the first who, in the war against Jugurtha, dishonored the [*269*] legions by introducing freedmen, vagabonds, and other mercenaries into them. The tyrants, having become the enemies of the peoples they had assumed the responsibility of making happy, established standing armies, in appearance to contain foreigners and in fact to oppress the local population. In order to raise these armies, farmers had to be taken off the land, the shortage of farmers lowered the quality of the produce, and their upkeep introduced taxes that raised its price. This first disorder caused peoples to grumble: in order to repress them, the number of troops had to be increased, and consequently so had the misery; and the more despair grew, the greater the compulsion to increase it still more in order to avoid its consequences. On the other hand, these mercenaries, whose worth could be judged by the price at which they sold themselves, proud of their debasement, despising the laws that protected them as well as their brothers whose bread they ate, believed it brought

them more honor to be Caesar's henchmen than the defenders of Rome; and pledged to blind obedience, they, by their station, held the dagger raised over their fellow-citizens, ready to slaughter all at the first signal. It would not be difficult to show that this was one of the principal causes of the ruin of the roman empire.

[56] In our times the invention of artillery and of fortifications has forced the sovereigns of Europe to re-establish the use of standing armies to defend their fortifications; but while the motives may be more legitimate, there is reason to fear that the effect may be equally fatal. It will be no less necessary to depopulate the countryside in order to raise armies and garrisons; in order to maintain them it will be no less necessary to oppress peoples; and of late these dangerous establishments have been growing so rapidly everywhere in our part of the world that one can only anticipate the early depopulation of Europe, and sooner or later the ruin of the peoples that inhabit it.

[57] Be this as it may, it must be evident that such institutions necessarily subvert the true economic system which derives the state's principal revenues from the public domain, and leave only the unpleasant resort to subsidies and taxes which it remains for me to discuss.

[58] It should be recalled in this connection that the foundation of the social pact is property, and its first condition that everyone be maintained in the peaceful enjoyment of what [*270*] belongs to him. It is true that by the same treaty everyone obligates himself, at least tacitly, to contribute his share toward the public needs; but since this commitment may not violate the fundamental law and assumes that the contributors recognize the evidence of need, it is plain that in order to be legitimate, this contribution has to be voluntary, not by [each] individual will, as if it were necessary to have each citizen's consent, and he had to provide only what he pleases, which would go directly counter to the spirit of the confederation, but by a general will, with a majority vote, and in accordance with proportional rates that eliminate all arbitrariness in the imposition [of taxes].

[59] This truth, that taxes can be established legitimately only by the consent of the people or its representatives, has been generally recognized by all philosophers and jurisconsults who have acquired any reputation in matters of political right, not

excepting Bodin himself. While some few have established apparently contrary maxims; besides its being easy to see the personal motives that led them to do so, they hedge them with so many conditions and restrictions that at bottom it comes down to exactly the same thing: for whether the people can refuse or the sovereign ought not to exact is, as regards right, a matter of indifference; and if it is only a question of force, then it is utterly useless to inquire what is and what is not legitimate.

[60] The contributions levied on the people are of two kinds: some real, which are levied on things; the others personal, which are paid by the head. Both are called either *taxes* or *subsidies*: when the people fixes the sum it grants, it is called a *subsidy*; when it grants the full proceeds of an assessment, it is a *tax*. According to *The Spirit of the Laws* the head tax is more in keeping with servitude, and the real tax more conformable with freedom. This would unquestionably be so if the shares paid per head were equal; for nothing would be more disproportionate than such a tax, and the spirit of freedom consists above all in strictly observed proportions. But if taxation by head is strictly proportioned to individuals' means, as what in France is called *capitation* could be, and thus be both real and personal, then it is the most [*271*] equitable and hence the most conformable to free men. At first these proportions appear quite easy to observe because they are relative to a person's station in the world, and the marks of one's station are always public; but quite aside from the fact that greed, influence and fraud find ways to elude even such [public] evidence, it is rare that all the elements that should be included in these calculations are taken into account. In the first place, the relation of quantities should be considered, according to which, all other things being equal, someone who has ten times more goods than another ought to pay ten times more. In the second place, the relation of uses, that is to say, the distinction between the necessary and the superfluous should be considered. Someone who has only the bare necessities should not pay anything at all; taxing someone who has superflux may, if need be, go up to the full amount that exceeds his necessities. To this he will say that in view of his rank what would be superfluous for someone of inferior rank is necessary for him; but this is a lie: for the Great have two legs, just as cowherds do, and like them they have but one stomach.

Besides, these supposed necessities are so little necessary to his rank that if he could bring himself to give them up for some praiseworthy cause, he would be all the more respected for doing so. The people would prostrate themselves before a minister who would go to the council on foot because he had sold off his carriages when the state was in urgent need. Finally, the law does not prescribe magnificence to anyone, and propriety is never a reason against right.

[61] A third relation that is never taken into account although it should always be the first, is that of the utility each person derives from the social confederation, which strongly protects the immense possessions of the rich and scarcely lets the wretched enjoy the hut he built with his own hands. Are not all the advantages of society on the side of the powerful and the rich? are not all the lucrative posts filled by them alone? are not all favors, all exemptions reserved for them? and is not public authority entirely partial in their favor? Let a man of standing rob his creditors or commit other mischief, is he not always certain of impunity? Are not the beatings he inflicts, the acts of violence he commits, even the murders and assassinations of which he is guilty, hushed up and within six months [*272*] no longer mentioned? Let the same man be robbed, the entire polity is immediately astir, and woe to the innocents he suspects. Is he traveling in a dangerous place? there is the escort taking the field: does the axle of his carriage break? everyone flies to his aid: is there noise at his gate? he says a word, and all falls silent: does the crowd bother him? he gives a sign, and all falls into place: is a cart-driver in his way? his people are ready to beat up on him; and fifty honest pedestrians going about their business would be crushed to death rather than have one idle fop delayed in his coach. All these attentions cost him not a penny; they are the rich man's right, not the price of riches. How different is the picture of the poor man! the more humanity owes him, the more society denies him: all doors are closed to him even when he has the right to have them opened; and if sometimes he obtains justice, it is with greater difficulty than another would obtain a pardon; if there is heavy labor to be done, a militia to be raised, it is he who is given preference; in addition to his own burden, he always bears the burden from which his richer neighbor has the influence to get

himself exempted; at the least accident that befalls him, everyone avoids him: if his poor cart tips over, far from being helped by anyone, I consider him fortunate if in making his way he escapes being battered by some young duke's ruffians; in a word, all free assistance flees him when he needs it, precisely because he lacks the means to pay for it; but I consider him a lost man if he has the misfortune to have an honest soul, an attractive daughter and a powerful neighbor.

[62] Another, no less important point to note is that it is far more difficult to make up for the losses of the poor than of the rich, and that the difficulty of acquiring always grows in proportion to need. Nothing is made out of nothing; this is as true in business as in Physics: money is the seed of money, and the first ten francs are sometimes harder to earn than the second million. What is more: everything the poor man pays is forever lost to him and remains in the hands of the rich or returns to them; and since the proceeds of taxes sooner or later go only to those who have a share in the government or are close to it, they have a clear interest in raising taxes even as they pay their share.

[*273*] [63] Let us summarize in a few words the social pact of the two estates: *You need me because I am rich and you are poor; let us therefore enter into an agreement with one another: I will allow you the honor of serving me, provided you give me the little you have left for the trouble I will take to command you.*

[64] If all these considerations are carefully combined, it will be found that in order to impose taxes equitably and truly proportionally they should be imposed not solely in proportion to the taxpayers' goods, but in a proportion that takes account both of the difference in their stations and of how much of their goods is superfluous. A most important and most difficult calculation which is daily performed by a host of honest clerks who know arithmetic, but which a Plato or a Montesquieu would have dared to undertake only with trembling and asking heaven for enlightenment and integrity.

[65] Another drawback of the personal tax is that it is felt to be excessively burdensome and is collected too harshly, which does not prevent its being subject to many evasions, because it is easier

to hide one's head than one's possessions from the tax-rolls and from prosecution.

[66] Of all the other kinds of assessment, quitrent on land or the real estate tax [*taille réelle*] has always been considered the most advantageous in countries where they care more about how much and how reliably revenue is collected than they do about causing the people any annoyance. Some have even dared to say that the peasant has to be burdened in order to rouse him from his laziness, and that he would not do anything if he did not have anything to pay. But the experience of all the peoples of the world belies this ridiculous maxim: it is in Holland, in England where the farmer pays very little, and above all in China where he pays nothing, that the land is best cultivated. By contrast, wherever the farmer is assessed in proportion to the yield from his land, he lets it lie fallow or produces only just what he needs to live. For to him who loses the fruit of his labor, to do nothing is to profit; and to impose a fine on work is rather an odd way to banish laziness.

[67] Taxes on land or on grain, especially when excessive, result in two inconveniences so terrible, that in the long run they must depopulate and ruin all countries where they are established.

[*274*] [68] The first is due to the lack of circulation of specie because commerce and industry draw all the money from the countryside into the capitals: and since the tax destroys any proportion that might still have obtained between the farmer's needs and the price of his grain, money constantly leaves and never returns; the richer the town, the more miserable the countryside. The proceeds from the land-taxes [*taille*] pass from the hands of the prince or the financier into the hands of artists and merchants; and the farmer who never receives but the smallest share of these proceeds finally wears himself out by forever paying the same and forever receiving less. How can a man be expected to live who had only veins and no arteries, or whose arteries carried blood only to within four inches of his heart? Chardin says that in Persia the king's duties on commodities are also paid in commodities; this practice, which Herodotus reports to have formerly prevailed in that country up to the time of Darius, might prevent the evil of which I have been speaking. But unless in Persia, intendants, directors, clerks, and warehouse guardians are a different kind of folk than anywhere else, I find it hard to believe

that the least part of all this produce ever reaches the king, that the grain does not spoil in all the granaries, and that fire does not consume most of the warehouses.

[69] The second inconvenience arises from an apparent advantage, which permits evils to get exacerbated before they are noticed. Grain is a commodity whose price is not raised by taxes in the region that produces it, and in spite of its being absolutely necessary, its supply decreases without its price increasing, which is why many people die of hunger although grain continues to be cheap, and why the farmer alone bears the burden of a tax he could not pass along in his selling price. It must be noted that one should not think about the real estate tax [*taille réelle*] as one does about [sales tax or] duties that raise the price of the merchandise on which they are imposed, and are thus paid not so much by the sellers as by the buyers. For these duties, however heavy they may be, are nevertheless voluntary, and are paid by the seller only in proportion to the quantity he buys; and since he buys only in proportion to his sales, he imposes the law on individuals. But the farmer, who is compelled to pay at specified times for the land he cultivates, regardless of whether he sells or not, is not [*275*] free to wait until his produce commands the price he wants for it; and even if he were not to sell it to support himself, he would be forced to sell it to pay the land tax, so that sometimes it is the enormity of the assessment that keeps down the price of the commodity.

[70] Note, further, that the resources of commerce and industry, far from making the land tax [*taille*] more bearable by an abundance of money, only make it more burdensome. I will not dwell on an obvious point, namely that although a greater or lesser quantity of money in a state may give it more or less credit abroad, it does not in any way change the real wealth of the citizens, and does not cause them to be more or less well off. But I will make the following two important remarks: the first, that unless the state has a food surplus and the abundance of money comes from selling it abroad, only commercial centers profit from this abundance while the peasant only grows relatively poorer by it: the second, that since the price of everything rises with an increase in the money supply, taxes also have to rise proportionately, so that the farmer finds himself more burdened without having more resources.

[71] It should be evident that the tax [*taille*] on land is a genuine tax on its produce. Yet everyone agrees that nothing is so dangerous as a tax on grain paid by the buyer: how can they fail to see that the evil is a hundred times worse when this tax is paid by the cultivator himself? Is this not to attack the subsistence of the state at its very source? Is it not also to work as directly as possible at depopulating the country; and hence at ruining it in the long run? For there is no worse scarcity for a nation than that of men.

[72] Only the genuine statesman is able to raise his sights higher than the financial objective in setting tax rates, to transform burdensome obligations into useful ways of regulating policy, and cause the people to wonder whether the aim of such establishments might not have been the good of the nation rather than tax receipts.

[73] Duties on the importation of foreign merchandise which the population covets but the country does not need, on the exportation of domestic merchandise of which the country has no excess and which foreigners cannot [*276*] do without, on the productions of the useless and excessively lucrative arts, municipal duties on pure amenities, and in general on all luxury items, will achieve this twofold objective fully. Such taxes, which ease poverty and burden riches, are the means by which to prevent the continual increase in the inequality of fortunes, the subjection to the rich of a multitude of workers and of useless servants, the increase of idle people in cities, and the desertion of the countryside.

[74] It is important to maintain the proportion between the price of things and the duties imposed on them such that individuals' greed not be too tempted by the size of the profits to commit fraud. Contraband should also be made less easy by favoring merchandise that is least easy to hide. Finally, it is proper that the tax be paid by the user of the taxed item rather than by the seller, who would find the many duties with which he would be burdened offering more temptations and more means to commit fraud. Such is the consistent practice in China, the country where the taxes are the heaviest and the best paid in the world: the merchant pays nothing; the buyer alone pays the duty, without its giving rise to grumbling or sedition; because since the commodities necessary for life, such as rice and grain, are completely

tax-exempt, the people are not oppressed, and the tax falls only on the well-to-do. Besides, these precautions should be dictated not so much by the fear of contraband as by the care the government should exercise to protect individuals from being seduced by illegitimate profits which, after having turned them into bad citizens, would soon turn them into dishonest folk.

[75] Let heavy taxes be imposed on liveries, carriages, mirrors, chandeliers, and fancy furniture, fabrics and gilding, town-house courtyards and gardens, theatrical performances of every kind, the idle professions: such as buffoons, singers, actors, and, in a word, on the host of objects of luxury, diversion and idleness that strike all eyes, and are all the more difficult to hide as their sole use is show, and they would be useless if they were not seen. There is no reason to fear that the proceeds from such taxes would be haphazard because they are only based on things that are not absolutely necessary: it shows a very poor knowledge of men to believe [*277*] that once they have let themselves be seduced by luxury they can ever renounce it; they would a hundred times sooner renounce necessities, and even rather die of hunger than of shame. The increased expense will be but one more reason to assume it when the vanity of showing that one is opulent finds its reward in the price of the object and the cost of the tax. As long as there are rich people, they will want to distinguish themselves from the poor, and the state cannot possibly devise a less burdensome or a more secure revenue than one based on this distinction.

[76] For the same reason industry would not in the least suffer from an economic order that enriched public Finances, revived Agriculture by relieving the farmer, and insensibly brought all fortunes closer to that moderate condition which makes for a state's genuine force. I recognize that taxes might happen to contribute to having some fashions disappear more rapidly; but it would never happen without substituting others from which the worker would benefit and the Treasury not suffer any loss. In a word, let us assume that it is the spirit of the government consistently to raise all taxes from the superflux of riches, one of two things will happen: either the rich will renounce their superfluous expenditures in favor of exclusively useful ones which will redound to the profit of the state; in that case the tax base would have produced the same effect as the best sumptuary laws; the

state's expenditures would necessarily have diminished along with those of individuals; and this way the Treasury could take in less only if it had much less to pay out: or if the rich do not in any way reduce their extravagances, the Treasury will collect in tax proceeds the resources it was seeking in order to provide for the real needs of the state. In the first place the Treasury is richer by all the expenditures it does not have to make; in the second, it is also richer by the useless expenditures of individuals.

[77] Let us add to all this an important distinction in the matter of political right, and to which governments intent on doing everything by themselves, should pay close attention. I said that since personal taxes and taxes on things that are absolutely necessary attack directly the right of property and hence the true foundation of political society, are always liable to dangerous consequences unless they are [*278*] established by the express consent of the people or of its representatives. The same does not hold regarding duties on things the use of which one can deny oneself; for since in that case the individual is not absolutely constrained to pay, his contribution may be regarded as voluntary; so that the individual consent of each of the contributors takes the place of the general consent, and in some sense even presupposes it: for why would the people oppose any assessment that affects only those who are willing to pay it? It seems to me certain that anything not forbidden by the laws or contrary to morals, and which the government may forbid, it may permit subject to a duty. If, for example, the government may prohibit the use of carriages, it may with all the more reason impose a tax on carriages, a wise and useful way to blame their use without putting a halt to it. Taxation may then be looked upon as a kind of fine, the amount of which compensates for the infraction it punishes.

[78] Someone might object that since those whom Bodin calls *imposteurs*, that is to say those who impose or think up taxes, belong to the class of the rich, they will not take pains to spare others at their own expense and burden themselves in order to relieve the poor. But such ideas must be rejected. If in every nation those to whom the sovereign commits the peoples' government were by their very station the peoples' enemies, it would not be worth the trouble to inquire what they must do to make the people happy.

# Abbreviations and Textual Conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| Buffon, *OP* | Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, edited by Jean Piveteau (PUF, Paris, 1954) |
| *CC* | Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*, collected, edited, and annotated by R. A. Leigh (Institut et Musée Voltaire, Geneva, and The Voltaire Foundation at the Taylor Institution, Oxford, 1965–1989) |
| *Conf.* | *Confessions* |
| *d'Alembert* | *Lettre à M. d'Alembert sur les spectacles*, in *OC* v, 1–125, and edited by M. Fuchs (Droz, Geneva, 1948) |
| tr. | translated by A. Bloom as *Politics and the Arts* (The Free Press, Glencoe, IL, 1960) |
| *Dictionnaire de Musique* | in *OC* v, 603–1191 |
| *Discourses* tr. | Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *"The Discourses" and Other Early Political Writings*, translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1997, 2018) |
| *Emile* | *Emile, ou de l'éducation*, in *OC* iv, 239–868 |
| *Emile* tr. | translation by A. Bloom (Basic Books, New York, 1979) |

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|---|---|
| *EOL* | *Essay on the Origin of Languages*: in *Discourses* tr. |
| *First Discourse* | *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*: in *Discourses* tr. |
| *Franquières* | *Letter to Franquières*: in *SC* tr. |
| *Geneva ms.* | the extensive early draft of the *Social Contract*: portions of which are translated in *SC* tr. |
| Grotius, *Right* | Grotius, *The Right of War and Peace* (London, 1738) |
| *Hero* | *Discourse on the Virtue a Hero Most Needs or Discourse on Heroic Virtue*: in *Discourses* tr. |
| Hobbes, *De cive* | Hobbes, *De cive*, edited by H. Warrander (Clarendon, Oxford, 1983) |
| *Ineq.* | *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men* (the so-called *Second Discourse*): in *Discourses* tr. |
| E | Exordium |
| ED | Epistle Dedicatory |
| N | Rousseau's Notes, thus: N IX [13] refers to para. 13 of Rousseau's Note IX |
| P | Preface |
| *LM* | *Lettres écrites de la Montagne*: in *OC* III, 683–897 |
| Meier, *Diskurs/ Discours* | Heinrich Meier, *Diskurs über die Ungleichheit/ Discours sur l'inégalité, kritische Ausgabe des integralen Textes, mit sämtlichen Fragmenten und ergänzenden Materialien nach den Originalausgaben und den Handschriften neu ediert, übersetzt und kommentiert* (second edition, Schöningh, Munich, 1990) |
| *Method* | *Idea of the Method in the Composition of a Book*: in *Discourses* tr. |
| Montaigne, *OC* | Montaigne, *Oeuvres complètes*, edited by A. Thibaudet and M. Rat (Paris, Pléiade, 1962) |
| Montaigne tr. | Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, translated by Donald Frame (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1958) |
| *Narcissus* | *Preface to "Narcissus"*: in *Discourses* tr. |
| *NH* | *La Nouvelle Héloïse* |

| | |
|---|---|
| *OC* | Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres complètes*, edited by B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond (Paris, Pléiade, 1959–1995). For example, *OC* III, 202–204 refers to pages 202–204 in volume III; [*202*] in the body of a translation indicates that what follows corresponds to page 202 of the relevant volume of *OC*. |
| *PE* | *Discourse on Political Economy*: in *SC* tr. |
| *Philopolis* | *Letter to Philopolis*: in *Discourses* tr. |
| *Poland* | *Considerations on the Government of Poland*: in *SC* tr. |
| Pufendorf, *Droit* | Samuel Pufendorf, *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, translated by Jean Barbeyrac (Amsterdam, 1712) |
| *Rêveries* tr. | *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, translated as *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* by Charles E. Butterworth (New York University Press, New York, 1979; reprint, Hackett Publishing, Indianapolis, IN and Cambridge, MA, 1992) |
| *SC* | *Of the Social Contract*: in *SC* tr. |
| *SC* tr. | Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *'The Social Contract' and Other Later Political Writings*, translated, with an Introduction and Notes, by Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge, 1997, 2018) |
| *Second Discourse* | *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men*: in *Discourses* tr. |
| *Second Letter* | *Preface of a Second Letter to Bordes*: in *Discourses* tr. |
| Vaughan, *Rousseau* | *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Political Writings*, edited by C. E. Vaughan, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1915; reprinted by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962) |
| *Voltaire* | *Letter to Voltaire*: in *Discourses* tr. |

| | |
|---|---|
| *War* | *Principles of the Right of War*: in *SC* tr. |
| [23] | paragraph numbers |
| [*23*] | *OC* page numbers (see explanation above) |
| *, ** | Rousseau's footnotes, numbered by paragraph in the sequence *, ** |

# Editorial Notes

## Political Economy (pages 1–36)

The essay on *Political Economy* was first published in November 1755, in volume v of Diderot's and d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia*, the volume which also contained Diderot's important article "Natural Right." An unauthorized reprint in pamphlet form of the article appeared in 1758 under the title *Discourse on Political Economy*, a title which Rousseau retained in the subsequent, authorized and corrected editions.

Rousseau certainly worked on the *Political Economy* between October 1754 and mid-1755, immediately after the *Second Discourse*, and he may well have worked on it earlier. The differences between the two works are best understood as due to the different perspectives from which they are written: in the *Second Discourse* he digs, as he says, to the roots (*Ineq.* 1 [47]) or first principles, to what in the title of the *Discourse* he refers to as "the origin and foundations" of political society; in the *Political Economy*, by contrast, he is primarily concerned with the workings of a legitimate political order, and most particularly with its administration, what he here primarily means by its "economy," and what in the language of the *Social Contract* he will call the "government" in contrast to the "sovereign."

The present translation is based on the current authoritative standard, Pléiade, edition of the *Political Economy OC* III, 239–278, edited by Robert Derathé. This edition records the additions and corrections in the 1782 Moultou-Du Peyrou edition; the more important ones are flagged in the Editorial Notes to this translation.

The other important recent editions of the *Political Economy* are those by C. E. Vaughan, included in his *Jean-Jacques Rousseau:*

*The Political Writings*, 2 vols. (Cambridge University Press, 1915; reprinted by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1962), vol. I, pp. 237–273, together with fragments of drafts of the text, ibid. pp. 274–280. Michel Launay published additional drafts and fragments in his edition of Rousseau's *Oeuvres complètes* (Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1971), vol. II, pp. 294–305. More recently Bruno Benardi edited a critical edition with commentaries by various scholars in the series *Textes et Commentaires* (Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, Paris, 2002).

In preparing the present translation, I have consulted the annotated translations into English by Roger D. and Judith R. Masters (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1978), and by Charles Sherover (Harper & Row, New York, 1984); and into German by Dietrich Leube et al., in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Sozialphilosophische und politische Schriften* (Winkler, Munich, 1981), annotations by Eckhart Koch. Professor William J. Barber helped with some technical tax terminology.

[1] **state** Throughout this text I have adhered to the Pléiade *OC* edition's practice of consistently spelling "state" in both senses of the term with a lower-case "s." In all other major texts, Rousseau reserved the lower-case spelling to "state" in the sense of "condition": as in "state of affairs" or "state of nature." ***general* or *political economy*** Rousseau also twice calls it public economy: [7], [8]. **See FATHER OF THE FAMILY** i.e. see the *Encyclopedia* article under that heading.

[3] **the magistrate can command others only by virtue of the laws**. The 1782 edition continues: "the power of the father over the children, based on what is to their particular advantage, can, by its nature, not extend to the right of life and death: but the sovereign power, which has no other object than the common good, has no other bounds than public utility properly understood: a distinction I will explain in the appropriate place."

[7] **Sir** Robert **Filmer**, *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings*, London, 1680; discussed by Barbeyrac in his translation of Pufendorf's *Droit de la nature et des gens*, IV, 2, § X, n. 2; refuted by Locke, *First Treatise of Government* and by Algernon Sidney, *Discourse Concerning Government*; **Aristotle saw fit to combat it . . . in the first book of his *Politics***: "Those who suppose that the same person is expert in political [rule], kingly [rule], managing the household and being a master [of slaves] do not argue rightly. For they consider that each of these differs in the multitude or fewness [of those ruled] and not in kind": I, 1, 1252a 6–11 (Lord, tr.); cf. I, 12,

1259b; III, 1278b, 1285b, 14, 15; *Nicomachaean Ethics* VIII, 10, 1160b 24–1161a 9.

[10] **The body politic . . . can be looked upon as an organized body . . . similar to a man's**. So, too, Hobbes at the beginning of the Introduction to the *Leviathan*; as Rousseau expressly warns, the analogy limps. Rousseau also frequently compares political society to a mechanism moved by springs which have to be re-wound every now and then.

[12] **moral being** Rousseau understands the expression in the technical sense attached to it by Pufendorf: a moral, in contrast to a physical being, is constituted by men's beliefs and practices; for a fuller statement of how he understands this expression, see Geneva ms. I 2[8] *et seq.* **general will** This is the first occurrence of the expression in Rousseau's writings. It occurs in Diderot's article *Droit naturel* ("Natural Right"), to which Rousseau refers a few lines below, and which appeared in the same volume of the *Encyclopedia* as this article of Rousseau's; for a history of the term and the conception, see Patrick Riley, *The General Will before Rousseau: The Transformation of the Divine into the Civic* (Princeton University Press, 1986); and see the Introduction above, pp. xxvii–xxviii. **the cunning prescribed to Lacedaemonian children to earn their frugal meal** So, too, Hobbes, *De cive* VI, 16 and XIV, 10; discussed and rejected by Pufendorf, *Droit*, VII, 1, § iii. ***See under* RIGHT** i.e. Diderot's article on "Natural Right" (translated by Wokler and Mason in their edition of *Diderot's Political Writings* [Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge University Press, 1992], pp. 17–21); see also Introduction, p. xxii above.

[17] **even brigands** . . . Diderot, *Natural Right*, IX, 4.

[19] **men united by their mutual needs in the great society** or "general society": *Geneva ms.* I, 2[2]; this is the stage introduced by the division of labor and hence of mutual dependence that made the institution of political society necessary: *Ineq.* II [19]–[29] and *SC* I 6 [1]; contrast Locke, *Treatises* II, § 128.

[21] **Plato . . . a reasoned preamble which shows their justice and utility** *Laws* IV 719e–724a. **It has always been noted that the countries where punishments are most terrible are also the countries where they are most frequent** . . . Rousseau does not go on to say, as did Montesquieu, that frequency and severity of punishments decreases in direct proportion as political freedom increases: *Of the Spirit of the Laws* VI 9.

[23] **lawgiver** The first mention of the figure – or conception – that will be assigned such a prominent place in the *Social Contract* (II 7).

**Not that the affair is not subsequently examined** . . . Reading *Ce n'est pas qu'on n'examine* with Vaughan, Launay, Bernardi and as the sense requires, in place of the Pléiade *OC*'s *Ce n'est pas qu'on examine*.

[24] **form men if you want to command men** We might be more likely to say "train men"; but here and in a number of later passages "form" is preferred because of its associations with the traditional distinction between form and matter, and because the reader might miss Rousseau's allusions when he uses such terms as "malformed" and "transform" [36].

[26] **those who are only waiting for impunity to do evil will scarcely lack** Reading *manquent* as the sense requires, in place of the Pléiade *OC*'s *manque*.

[28] **wicked oneself** The 1782 edition goes on: "'Sicuti enim est aliquando misericordia puniens, ita est crudelitas parcens.' Aug[ustine], *Epist[olae]*, 54." ["Just as pity can sometimes punish, so can cruelty pardon."]

[30] **Socrates** . . . **Cato** Socrates (469–399 BC) lived through the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC), but did not long survive Athens's defeat by Sparta; the Younger Cato (95–46 BC), a Stoic, long opposed Caesar; when all was lost he committed suicide rather than survive the death of the Republic; Rousseau called him "the greatest of men"; on the comparison, see the Introduction, p. xi above. **Caesar and Pompey** had long competed for the first place in Rome; for a time they had done so as allies, but later became enemies. Caesar defeated Pompey at Pharsalus (48 BC); Pompey thereupon fled to Egypt where, not long afterwards, he was murdered.

[33] **the *lex Porcia*** or Porciae, named for the Elder Cato, M. Portius Cato, was promulgated probably in 198 BC; it also prohibited the scourging of Roman citizens without appeal.

[35] **tax-farmers** or publicans (*fermiers généraux*), were, by the middle of the eighteenth century, sixty individual financiers or syndicates who bought (at auction) the privilege of collecting taxes in a district (for a period of six years), in exchange for remittal of an agreed upon sum to the State. It is obvious that the system invited gross abuse; but certainly not all tax-farmers abused their powers. The philosopher Helvétius, as well as the chemist Lavoisier, were tax-farmers. For a melancholy account, see Tocqueville, *The Ancien Régime and the Revolution* II, 12.

[36] **anyone who has to govern men should not look for a perfection beyond their nature of which they are not capable** Cf. the opening of the *Social Contract*: "I want to inquire whether in

the civil order there can be some legitimate and reliable rule of administration, taking men as they are . . ."

[39] **public education in former times; namely, the Cretans, the Lacedaemonians, and the ancient Persians** Plato, *Laws* 671–674, *Alcibiades* 121e–122a, reported by Montaigne, *Essays*, I, 25 and I, 31; also *First Discourse* [22], [51]**.

[43] **Pufendorf has shown, by its nature the right of property does not extend beyond the life of the proprietor** "since the things that can be objects of property are of use to men only as long as they are alive, and the dead have no more part in the affairs of this world; it was not necessary for the institution of Property to extend to the point of giving the Proprietor the power of choosing whomever he likes to inherit the goods he leaves at death." *Droit de la nature et des gens* IV, 10, § iv.

[45] **If the people governed itself . . . But things cannot possibly work this way . . . civil society is always too numerous to allow it to be governed by all of its members.** This is a constant in Rousseau's analysis of political society; it leads to the rise of what he calls "governments" and the "hypothetical history of governments" in the *Second Discourse* II [36]; and it leads him to reject direct democracy in the *Social Contract*: III 4[3].

[47] **the integrity of the quaestor Cato**: Plutarch, *Cato the Younger* XVII, 1, ii; XVIII, 1–4. **an emperor rewarding a singer's talents**. Galba (3 BC–AD 69), emperor for a year after Nero's murder. Plutarch says it was a flute-player, not a singer, Galba rewarded out of his own pocket: Plutarch, *Galba* XVI, 1–2.

[50] **on sufferance** By which Rousseau appears to mean that a state in debt is a state that is not entirely stable, and hence does not fully enjoy – or deserve – the citizens' trust.

[51] **granaries** A practice sharply criticized by the physiocrat Quesnais in his article "Grain" in the *Encyclopedia* vol. VII (p. 825); Rousseau repeats his endorsement of the practice in his *Project for a Constitution for Corsica, OC* III, 923 (Derathé). *It nourishes and enriches: alit et ditat*.

[52] **the policy Joseph followed with the Egyptians** *Genesis* 47: 14–26; cf. *Genesis* 41:34–36, 47–49.

[55] **courageous citizens who were ready to shed their blood for the fatherland** Rousseau consistently favors citizen armies and consistently criticizes professional or mercenary troops: e.g. *Poland* [12]; it is in this spirit that he goes on: **Marius . . . in the war against Jugurtha**, [111–105 BC] **dishonored the legions** . . . Because the changes he introduced marked the beginning of a professional army

in Rome; Rousseau develops this theme at length in the *Social Contract* (especially IV 4[18]); there, as here, he draws a close parallel between the professionalization of the army and the decline of the Republic. This criticism goes hand in hand with his criticism, in the present *Discourse* as well as in the *Considerations on the Government of Poland*, of taxation in the form of money rather than in the form of public service (II [5]) and of his criticism, in the *Social Contract*, of claims to represent the sovereign will (*SC* III 15[6]–[8]).

The argument and even the language of the remainder of this paragraph very closely corresponds to the description of the final stage of inequality in *SD* II [53]–[57].

[58] . . . **everyone obligates himself, at least tacitly, to contribute** . . . **toward the public needs;** . . . **to be legitimate, this contribution has to be voluntary** . . . **by a general will, with a majority vote** . . . In the margin of the draft version of the *Discourse* Rousseau wrote at this point: "see Locke." The reference would be to the following paragraph: "'Tis true, Governments cannot be supported without great Charge, and 'tis fit every one who enjoys his share of the Protection, should pay out of his Estate his proportion of the maintenance of it. But still, it must be with his own Consent, *i.e.* the Consent of the Majority, giving it either by themselves, or their Representatives chosen by them. For if anyone shall claim a *Power to lay* and levy *Taxes* on the People, by his own Authority, and without the consent of the People, he thereby invades the *Fundamental Law of Property*, and subverts the end of Government. For what property have I in that which another may by right take, when he pleases to himself?" *Second Treatise of Government* XI, § 140. Rousseau's argument and language very closely correspond to this passage, down to the reference to "fundamental law."

[59] **taxes** i.e. *impôts*; which, in Rousseau's usage, may mean, as it does here, what we would call "tax" in the most general sense of that term, or, sometimes, "impost"; very occasionally he distinguishes between *taxe* and *impôt*, as he does in the next paragraph. **not excepting Bodin**, who pointed out that "It was decided at the estates of this Kingdom[,] King Philip de Valois being in attendance[,] in the year 1338[,] that no taxes would be levied of the people, without its consent": *The Six Books on the Republic* (1576) VI, ii (Derathé).

[60] **In the book on *The Spirit of the Laws* one finds that the head tax is more in keeping with servitude, and the real tax more conformable with freedom**. Rousseau is quoting the opening sentence of Montesquieu's *Of the Spirit of the Laws* XIII,14. **But if**

reading: *Mais si la taxe*, as the sense requires, in place of *Mais la taxe* as in the Pléiade *OC*.

[62] . . . **everything the poor man pays is forever lost to him, and remains in the hands of the rich or returns to them** For the argument in support of this conclusion, see [69].

[68] **financier**: the official charged with levying the public revenues; both tax-assessor and tax-collector. **Chardin** . . . Herodotus reports: "In the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses there had been no regular and fixed tax, only collection of gifts . . . I have not recorded any taxation of Persia, which is the only country not subject to tax. The Persians hold their land free of tax": Herodotus, *Histories* III, 89, 97 (David Grene, tr.). This report follows immediately upon Herodotus's report of the discussion about the best regime by the seven liberators of Persia, and of Otanes's relinquishing any title to rule, which Rousseau discusses in *SD*, Note I. **intendants** To a mid-eighteenth-century French reader, this would most particularly have called to mind the *intendants*, of whom there were thirty at the time, and who administered entire provinces in the King's name; very loosely, their powers and responsibilities corresponded to those of what are now known as "prefects."

[77] **I said** in [59] above that . . . **personal taxes and imposts** . . . **are always liable to dangerous consequences, unless** . . . **established with the express consent of the people or of its representatives**. Rousseau's explicitly calling attention to this remark clearly indicates that his mention of "representatives" is not accidental; yet in the *Social Contract* he very emphatically rejects the possibility of representing the general will or sovereignty (III 15; cf. II 1[1]; II 4[6]; III 14[1]); it is, of course, possible that he changed his mind on this subject, but there are other, more plausible ways of accounting for this difference.